

FLORIDA LAND STEWARD



A Quarterly Newsletter for Florida Landowners and Resource Professionals

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Congratulations to George and Pat Owens, 2017 Florida Land Stewards of the Year

By Chris Demers, UF/IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation

George Owens is a fourth-generation farmer in Washington County, Florida. Growing up in the farming business and involved in the 4-H Program and Future Farmers of America, he carries on the agricultural legacy of his family and land. The George C. Owens Farm is recognized by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as a Century Pioneer Family Farm. This program honors family farms that have been maintained for at least 100 years of continuous ownership, and recognizes these pioneers as the original stewards of the land in preserving environmental resources, and for helping foster the state's agricultural industry.

While working for the Florida Department of Agriculture, George learned about silvopasturing, a technique that combines the production of trees, forage and livestock on the same land. This system was more commonly used in South America, but hadn't been used much in the United States at that time. The couple decided to learn more about it and give it a try, establishing their first silvopasture in 1984. Starting with an open parcel of land, they planted pine trees and forage, and prepared the land for the introduction of cattle. Since then, the farm has become one of the most

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George and Pat Owens were selected as the 2017 Florida Land Stewards for their ground-breaking work in establishing a successful silvopasture operation, outstanding conservation ethic, and showing that environmental and economic sustainability work hand in hand. Photo by Mark Mauldin.

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renowned silvopasture operations in the Southeastern United States. The trees are managed for high-value saw logs and at the same time provide shade, shelter, and forage for livestock, reducing stress and increasing forage production. This is an intentional, integrated and intensively managed system designed to optimize timber, forage and livestock production from the same acreage, at the same time.

Silvopastoral systems offer distinct economic and environmental benefits. Among the most important is the potential for annual revenue, and therefore improved cash flow compared to what can be expected from timber production alone. Other advantages from the timber management perspective include vegetation control under tree canopies by grazing, and increased tree growth as a by-product of forage fertilization and animal waste recycling.

Silvopastures provide benefits to livestock management as well. There is a longer grazing period compared to open pasture due to earlier green-up and delayed forage maturity under tree canopies. Trees offer shelter to livestock from heat and inclement weather.

Planning for a silvopasture requires careful consideration of suitable tree, forage and livestock species for intended sites, and markets. Selected tree and forage species need to be able to share the existing site resources and produce acceptable growth. The state-of-the-art silvopastoral systems consist of three complementary plant components: trees, and both warm- and cool-season forage species. Beef cattle are usually the livestock of choice, but other animal species are compatible

with silvopastoral systems, such as goats, horses, sheep and deer.

Florida Land Steward Partners strive to assist landowners in achieving their forest, wildlife and agricultural goals for their properties. George C. Owens Farm demonstrates that environmental and economic sustainability walk hand in hand in good stewardship. Join us for a tour of the property on March 14, 2018: <https://fsp-tour031418.eventbrite.com>



Silvopasture combines timber and livestock forage production on the same acres. This system provides many financial and environmental benefits.

The Florida Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Database

By Brian Camposano, Florida Forest Service and Amy Knight, Florida Natural Areas Inventory

The Florida Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Geodatabase is a partnership between the Florida Forest Service (FFS) and Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) to develop a central source of information on the distribution and ecological condition of longleaf pine ecosystems in Florida. Longleaf pine ecosystems are among the most diverse in North America, supporting a large array of herbs and grasses, as well as rare animal species such as

red-cockaded woodpeckers and gopher tortoises. Although longleaf pine forests and savannas once dominated the southeastern coastal plain, they have been drastically reduced from an estimated 90 million acres to around 3 million. There is significant interest, both regionally and state-wide, for longleaf pine restoration on both public and private land. **This project contributes to longleaf pine restoration, management, and conservation**

by helping us better understand how longleaf pine is currently distributed and the condition of the associated habitat.

Since 2012, with funding from the USDA Forest Service, we have worked with partners throughout the state to gather location and condition information on longleaf pine stands, primarily on public lands. However, most recent gains

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in longleaf pine planting have been on private lands, and the project is currently focused on filling those data gaps.

How You Can Help

The FFS and FNAI are requesting voluntary assistance from forest landowners and managers to improve our knowledge about longleaf pine stands in Florida. To make it easy, we have developed an online form for entering information about the occurrence and condition of longleaf pine stands. Click here to access the form: <http://cospp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/GeoForm/index.html?appid=6d4d38894ac1450ab372be4aa410c455>

We would like to know if you own or manage longleaf pine and the location of the stand(s). It is also helpful to know if your current stand(s) are not longleaf pine. On the form, you also have the option to fill in other details about the stand.

Landowners with longleaf pine have other options for participation. Contact your local FFS county forester to request a no-cost assessment



The statewide longleaf pine data set will be used for longleaf forest restoration and management planning across Florida. Photo by Gary Knight.

and learn about other services provided to private landowners: FreshFromFlorida.com/CountyForester

How This Information Will Be Used

Information about longleaf pine will become a part of a statewide data set that can be used by various organizations for restoration and management planning, as well as providing localized management

recommendations to interested private landowners. For example, the FFS may use the data to help prioritize cost-share projects; or local Longleaf Implementation Teams may use the data to develop a restoration work plan for their region.

There is no regulatory component to this project, and at no time will participation in this project cause a landowner to be compelled to manage or otherwise modify their property in any way. The data is intended for display on a map. We do not keep or report any ownership information in the database for privately held lands. Contact us for more information about map display options or concerns.

To access the Longleaf Pine GeoForm or obtain more information about the project, please visit the project website: FNAI.org/LongleafGDB.cfm

Questions?

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Landscaping for Wildlife

By Pete Diamond, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Mention the phrase “habitat conservation” and most people envision large tracts of land in rural areas with a diversity of animal habitats. The truth of the matter is that wildlife is all around us, even in our smaller urban and suburban backyards, and many of the animals living in these areas have the same needs as those inhabiting large preserves or undisturbed forestlands.

Providing a few habitat necessities for animals living closer to developed areas - or enhancing existing

habitat features - can go a long way toward benefitting resident birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. A well-rounded landscape could also make all the difference to travel-weary migratory birds. Good habitat, whether it's in a backyard garden, a five-acre farmstead, or a 500-acre ranch, meets the basic needs of wildlife by providing food, water, cover, and space for reproducing and raising young.

Wildlife Essentials: Food, Water, and Cover

Food is a critical need of all living organisms and native plants form the foundation of the food chain in natural systems. Gardens and landscapes with a diverse array of native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees will yield seeds, pollen, nectar, edible foliage, berries, nuts, and insects while also providing cover. Key considerations with regard

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Creating, maintaining, or enhancing habitat is good for Florida's wildlife. Photo by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.



to food sources for wildlife are diversity, availability, and reliability.

It's also important to ensure that wildlife have a year-round supply of food in quantities that are fairly consistent from one year to the next. This is especially true in residential areas where natural food sources may be more limited. Various types of feeders, such as those for birds, squirrels, and hummingbirds, can supplement seasonal food offerings of native plants. For some species of birds, feeders can be helpful during winter months, especially in colder parts of the state.

Water is another essential element for animal health and survival. Adding a birdbath, container water garden, or small pond can become a reliable and important source of drinking water that many species will come to depend on, especially during drier times of the year.

Birds need to bathe in order to keep their feathers in good working order. Many animals' lives are integrally linked with water and wetland habitats. Frogs and dragonflies, for example, start their lives in water. Others, such as turtles, herons,

and otters depend on permanent water sources for their survival.

Placing water features near a tree or shrub offers visiting birds a place to perch. Adding rocks or partially submerged logs can double as basking sites for turtles or as fishing platforms for wading birds. Enhance aesthetics with plantings of native grasses and regionally adapted shrubs. This added cover may increase the use of water features by certain types of wildlife.

Protective cover is another key habitat requirement. Wildlife need shelter from storms as well as from the hot sun and winter winds. Cover provides places to hide from predators and, conversely, offers screening for predators to stalk prey. A diversity of cover types is best. Groundcovers, native grasses, perennial plants, and short shrubs offer low, dense cover. Balance these with twiggy and multi-stemmed, medium-height and taller shrubs, as well as a mix of deciduous and evergreen plants. Brush piles can be a refuge for reptiles while dead trees, or standing snags, can provide cover and nesting habitat for bats, squirrels, and some bird species.

Alternatively, landowners can install nesting boxes for birds (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw058>) and roosting houses for insect-eating bats (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw290>).

Existing with Pets and Livestock

Along with making backyards more wildlife friendly, it's important to consider interactions with family pets and livestock. Manage pets appropriately by limiting their access to areas where they may harass or prey on songbirds, reptiles, or mammals. Some planting and habitat enhancements that draw wildlife closer to the ground and closer to developed areas could make certain wildlife more prone to attacks by pets. Free-ranging domestic cats, for example, are estimated to kill more than 1.3 billion birds and more than 6.3 billion mammals annually in the United States (Loss et al, 2013).

Be mindful, too, that pets and domesticated livestock could be injured in conflicts with wildlife. Domesticated and wild animals are naturally more defensive when cornered or when protecting their young. Guard against predators, like opportunistic coyotes, by keeping

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While they can be attractive, invasive plants like mimosa can take over, displace more desirable natives, and spread to other places.

pets on leashes or in fenced areas and by securing pets and livestock at the onset of dusk.

Invasive Species

Removing invasive plants from natural areas and gardens is an integral part of improving habitat for Florida's wildlife. Besides displacing beneficial native species, exotic invasive plants typically provide little or no food value for wildlife. These non-native species are also responsible for decreasing biodiversity and altering ecosystems, including changing soil chemistry and increasing the frequency, risk, and intensity of wildland fires.

Providing basic habitat elements - food, water, and cover - is simple enough to do and can have far-reaching benefits for a whole host of wild creatures. In

our increasingly urbanized world, no effort to assist wildlife should be considered too small. Creating, maintaining, or enhancing habitat is good for Florida and it's good for Florida's wildlife. Adding native Florida plants provides multiple benefits for wildlife. Besides being attractive and suitable for home landscapes, these garden-worthy species will also grow well in all parts of the state. You can create a list of suitable plants to your county, site conditions, and purpose with the Florida Native Plant Society's Natives for Landscaping tool at: <http://www.fnps.org/plants>

Additional sources of information about wildlife, wildlife habitats, and landscaping for wildlife:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
<http://www.myfwc.com/>

Florida Native Plant Society
<http://www.fnps.org/home/>

National Wildlife Federation
<https://www.nwf.org/>

UF/IFAS Extension, Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS)
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Your Backyard Woods and Wildlife Handbook available at the UF/IFAS Extension Bookstore
<http://ifasbooks.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Loss, S.R., T. Will, and P.P. Mara. 2013.
The impact of free-ranging domestic cats on wildlife of the United States. Nature Communications 4, Article number: 1396.
<http://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms2380>

Get Email Updates!

Don't miss out on upcoming events and news! A lot happens between issues of this quarterly newsletter. Send an email to cdemers@ufl.edu to be added to the stewardship listserv. Updates are sent every week or two and include the latest calendar of workshops, tours and other events, a link to the current issue of this newsletter, updates on cost-share and other assistance programs and resources, and other stewardship related information.

TIMBER PRICE UPDATE

The timber pricing information below is useful for observing trends over time, but does not reflect current conditions at a particular location. Landowners considering a timber sale are advised to solicit the services of a consulting forester to obtain current local market conditions.

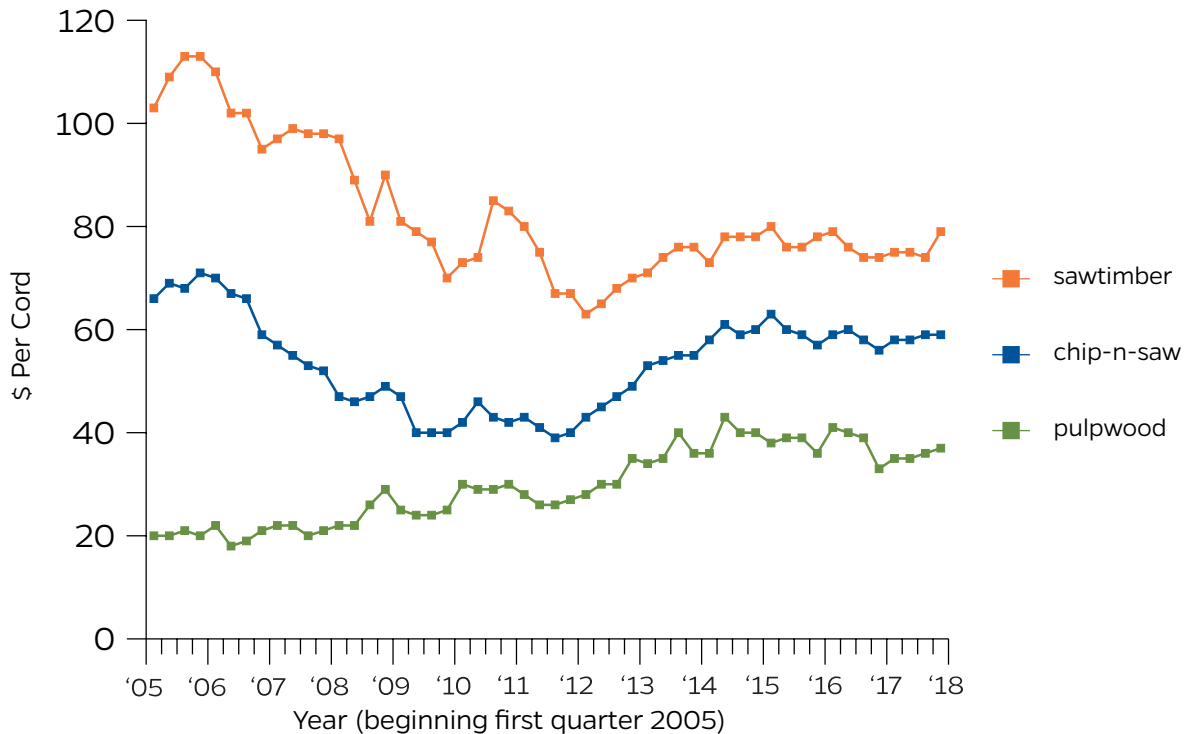
Average stumpage prices for the three major products in Florida, as reported in the **4th Quarter 2017** Timber Mart-South report were:

Florida Stumpage Prices	
Pine pulpwood:	\$37/cord (\$14/ton), same as 3 rd Qtr. 2017
Pine C-N-S:	\$59/cord (\$22/ton), same
Pine sawtimber:	\$79/cord (\$30/ton), ↑

Trend Report

Average stumpage prices were up across most of the south this quarter. Most 4th quarter 2017 average stumpage prices in Florida were level with or up from the 3rd quarter, with pine sawtimber up about \$2 per ton, on average. A sweeping overhaul of the Tax Code passed by Congress in December 2017 has triggered many questions about timber taxes. To help private forest landowners, foresters, loggers and timber businesses with their 2017 tax return filings and planning for the new tax law changes in 2018, a one-hour free webinar will be presented by Dr. Linda Wang at 1 pm ET on March 2. See <https://timbertax.org/> for information on this webinar and other timber tax resources.

Average Pine Stumpage Prices for Florida
1st Qtr 2005 through 4th Qtr 2017



Timber Mart-South is compiled and produced at the Center for Forest Business, Warnell School of Forest Resources, University of Georgia, under contract with the Frank W. Norris Foundation, a non-profit corporation serving the forest products industry. See <http://www.tmart-south.com/> for information on subscriptions.

CONGRATULATIONS CERTIFIED FOREST STEWARDS AND TREE FARMERS

For more information about becoming a Certified Forest Steward or Tree Farmer, contact your Florida Forest Service County Forester, consultant or learn about it at:

<http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/For-Landowners/Programs/>

or

<http://www.floridaforest.org>

These landowners have a current Forest Stewardship and/or Tree Farm management plan for their property and have demonstrated excellent stewardship of their land resources.



R.B. and Cecil Davis, Hamilton County



Dan and Jane Hendry with Dave Conser (center), Alachua County



Dean Stewart (L) with Ricky Jones, Santa Rosa County



Fred Clark (L) with Dave Conser, Alachua County



John Hodges, Santa Rosa County



Jonathan Harris, Washington County



Robert Case, Hamilton County



Steven Potosky, Washington County



Tim, Chase and Catherine Rudder, Escambia County

Upcoming Stewardship, Small Farm and Other Events

Date	Event, Location, Contact
Feb 23	Forest Stewardship Tour at South Prong Plantation , property of Doug Moore, Baker County, morning tour at 9:00 am or afternoon tour at 11:30 am ET. South Prong Plantation in Baker County. \$10 fee covers lunch and materials. <i>Register online at https://fsp-tour022318.eventbrite.com or contact the UF/IFAS Extension Baker County (904) 259-3520.</i>
March 2	Forestry Webinar: Timber Tax Filing for the 2017 Tax Year , 1 pm ET. See https://timbertax.org/ for details.
March 7	Opportunities in Agritourism in North Florida , 8 am to 4 pm ET, UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center, 155 Research Road, Quincy, FL 32351. Explore case studies and resources to guide you in starting an ecotourism enterprise. <i>Call NFREC for details and registration, (850) 875-7101.</i>
March 9	2018 Florida Forest Stewardship Landowner Short Course , 8:30 am to 3:00 pm ET, Austin Cary Forest, near Gainesville, FL. Five concurrent topic sessions including forest health, timber marketing and forest certification, wildlife management, tree identification, and prescribed fire. Choose 2 topics (1 morning, 1 afternoon) to customize your day. \$10 fee includes lunch and materials. <i>Register online at https://fsp-shortcourse030918.eventbrite.com/, or contact Chris Demers, cdemers@ufl.edu, (352) 846-2375.</i>
March 14	Silvopasture Tour at George Owens Farm , 2017 Florida Land Steward of the Year, Washington County, 9 am to 3 pm CT, meet at the UF/IFAS Extension Washington County Office, 1424 Jackson Avenue, Chipley, FL 32428. Learn about the economic and environmental benefits of the silvopasture system - combining timber and livestock forage production on the same acres. \$10 fee covers lunch and materials. <i>Register online at https://fsp-tour031418.eventbrite.com or call UF/IFAS Extension Washington at (850) 638-6180.</i>
March 21	Invasive Species and Control Workshop , 9am to 3 pm ET, UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County Auditorium, 5339 County Rd 579, Seffner, FL 33584. Provided by Suncoast Invasive Species Management Area and Florida Forest Stewardship Program. FDACS pesticide applicator CEUs and SAF CFEs pending approval. Cost is \$10 per person, lunch and materials included. <i>Register on-line at https://fsp-workshop032118.eventbrite.com/ or call Sharon Stinson, (863) 534-7074.</i>

For many more events and information see: floridalandsteward.org

The Florida Land Steward Newsletter is a University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service, Florida Forest Service, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Florida Tree Farm joint project:

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